

## P R E F A C E.

---

IN the following Essay I have, as far as possible, studied brevity, and have purposely avoided repeated references to History : partly because I considered the object I had in view would best be carried out by arguing on general principles, partly because examples from the History of War can, like " figures," be adduced to prove anything. The present Essay is an expansion of a short paper I wrote on the subject in 1867, and which, though not published, was submitted to the Military Authorities. The notion of Mounted Infantry is of course hundreds of years old, and it is useless, therefore, my attempting to disclaim any pretensions of an important discovery. All that I have attempted is to put the matter before the public in the light in which it appears to me, and, in case the Military Authorities should ever decide to reform the organization of the Mounted branches of the Service, to draw attention to what I believe is the groove in which the changes should run.

G. C. H.

SEROOR, *26th August 1874.*

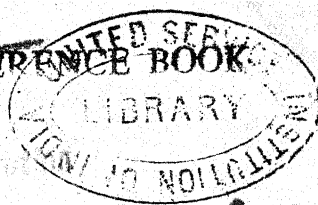
OLD COLLECTION

Not to be taken out



Acc. No. 9442

S. 424



## MOUNTED INFANTRY:

An ESSAY, by Capt. HOGG.

356  
H7AM

~~Handwritten scribbles and signatures~~

THE advantages of being able to place a body of men who can fight on foot suddenly on an enemy's flank, or of being able to detach them to seize with rapidity an important position, are obvious; and there can be no conceivable objection to Mounted Infantry viewing it merely as an abstract idea. The question for discussion is, whether such a system of organization is practicable, and, if practicable, are there any disadvantages attending it which more than counterbalance the advantages and which render its adoption inexpedient?

The question has been put before us in various aspects: some writers pointing out its special claims to attention in a country like India, where from the great mobility of Mounted Troops they are peculiarly adapted to meet the tactics of an enemy whose evasive style of warfare so frequently leads to a hasty retreat on the one side and a wearisome and too often ineffectual pursuit on the other: others recommend it to attention on account of its manifest utility in what are called the minor operations of warfare; some writers have merely suggested that it is advisable to give our Cavalry more power on certain occasions to take

care of itself ; and, lastly, it has been discussed as a new arm of the Service, not only independent of, but practically capable of superseding, the Infantry.

The various propositions which have been put forth have not as yet succeeded in making any practical impression on the heads of our Military Departments. Notwithstanding all that has been said in its favour, and the practical experiences of the American War, the fact remains that the feasibility of Mounted Infantry has not as yet presented itself in the same light to our Military Commanders as it has to the individual enthusiasts who have advocated its claims. It is certainly not a hopeful sign, after all the extensive war experience we have had lately, that a practical nation like the Germans, ever ready to improve their Military Establishments, should not have thought it necessary to turn serious attention to the subject ; and Boguslawski, in his "Tactical Deductions," says, that after the experience of 1870 he opposes the organization of Mounted Infantry, though he had previously supported it. In questions, however, of such great importance, and which involve such extensive changes, it is of course to be expected that the feeble efforts of a few individuals cannot at once produce any effect on the minds of those who naturally base their opinions on the experience of years, and those who advocate changes should not be discouraged because their case may at the time appear hopeless. It will be sufficient for them to know that they have temporarily drawn attention to what they believe to be a necessary reform, and they must then remain satisfied to leave it to time to gradually bring forth the results which they would at once, and forcibly, drag into existence. Pleading guilty, therefore, to a charge of presumption for supporting views which have



found so little favour with Officers of distinction and vast experience, I will proceed to the discussion of my subject.

It is absolutely necessary in the first place that we should clearly understand what it is we want. Is the offensive power of the Mounted Infantry to be limited to such occasions as they may happen to be fighting on foot with their comrades holding their dismounted horses? or are they also in their mounted formation to be capable of resisting attacks of Cavalry? Are they in their capacity as foot soldiers to be competent to take a prominent part in general engagements, or are their services to be limited to detached duties now undertaken by the Cavalry? In fact, are they to be generally useful, or are their services to be limited to a few special occasions; and are they to be able to protect themselves on all occasions, or must it be considered necessary to have a mounted escort to take care of them? All these are points which we should settle before proceeding any further in the discussion, as it would be idle arguing the question out until we thoroughly comprehend what it is we want. It will probably be admitted that it would be useless to adopt any system of organization for Mounted Riflemen that would only be useful on certain special occasions. For instance, suppose we kept up mounted establishments, as has been advocated by some, for our Infantry as at present constituted, and mounted our foot soldiers as occasion required, such a system would, manifestly, have many objections; for the Infantry would only occasionally require the services of their beasts of burden, which at other times would be useless: thus involving great expense and extra strain on the Commissariat out of all proportion to services rendered. A similar objection would hold good to light carts, which

We must define exactly what it is we want.

could only be made use of provided the ground was favourable, or in fact to any system where there was no permanent bond of union between the men and their means of transport. Furthermore, any system of organization which involved the necessity of providing escorts must necessarily fail in commending itself to approbation. We have quite enough of encumbrances in the way of baggage and convoys which require protection without being compelled to furnish escorts to helpless mounted soldiers; and we thus get so far in our discussion, that,

Mounted Infantry must be self-supporting, and able to fight equally well mounted or dismounted.

whatever system of Mounted Infantry we introduce, one thing is quite apparent, and that is, that it must be a *sine quâ non* that it is not only useful under certain favourable conditions, which may or may not be forthcoming, but that it must also be able to take care of itself, if necessary, when attacked by the enemy's Cavalry. And, furthermore, that the organization should be such, that, if opportunities do not occur to enable a Commander to employ the Riflemen in a dismounted capacity, he may be able to utilise their services in other equally important duties in connection with the mounted branch of the service. In a word, the organization must be self-supporting and of universal application. If we can only get clear ideas so far, the discussion as to the various methods by which we can obtain what we want will be rendered easier and more simple.

The question of equitation being a most important one, it

Proficiency in equitation necessary for the Mounted Riflemen.

will be necessary to say a few words on the degree of proficiency required for the Mounted Rifleman, be he Infantry or Cavalry man. There are some who think that very little instruction in riding is necessary, and that

all that is required is, that the foot soldier should ride well enough to avail himself of the services of his horse for being transported from one position to another. This, I take it, is a most dangerous doctrine. The *sine quâ non* put forth by some advocates for Mounted Riflemen, that it is most important that in any system we may adopt the greatest care must be taken to prevent the Mounted Infantry man becoming a Cavalry soldier pure and simple, may be good, but it must be accepted with certain qualifications. So far as such a precaution may involve the introduction of a method of organization under which the neglect of the necessary Infantry training may be carefully guarded against, so far it holds good ; but it is equally clear, that, whilst due regard must be had for the most perfect training as an Infantry soldier, the necessities of equitation must not be neglected. This is a point on which too much stress cannot be laid, and it is based on the fact of the absolute necessity of good proficiency in riding when a man has only one hand to manage his horse, and should be in a position to devote the other, as also his undivided attention, to the destruction of his enemy. We have all had every-day experiences of the helplessness of a bad rider when mounted, and it would indeed be a dangerous experiment, and be playing at soldiers with a vengeance, to permit any system under which mounted men, who were indifferent riders, should be allowed to present themselves on the theatre of a battle-field. In these preliminary remarks I have endeavoured to establish two things : first, that, if Mounted Riflemen are to be a success, the men must be able to ride really well ; and, secondly, that they must be self-supporting and available for a variety of duties. Making these two conditions my starting-point, it will next be necessary to ascertain whether we have any material available, and, if so, whence it is forthcoming.

Mounted Infantry can be organized in three ways—first, by

Mounted Infantry can be  
raised in three ways.

making use of the Infantry branch  
and as occasion requires mounting  
them on horses or other beasts of

burden to convey them to particular spots on the field of  
battle ; secondly, by the Cavalry as now constituted, who can  
dismount and fight on foot when their services may be so re-  
quired ; and, lastly, by a special Corps of Mounted Riflemen  
organized and trained for the special purpose. In consider-  
ing the comparative merits of these three systems, it will be  
necessary to keep in mind one point, which is an important  
element in the discussion, and that is the extra cost of any

Budget exigencies must  
be considered.

arrangement that may be proposed  
with reference to Budget exigencies.

Efficiency may be bought at too  
great a price, but, if we can combine efficiency with economy  
in expenditure, we shall start with a better chance of making  
our way.

The employment of the Infantry arm as now constituted

involves, of course, the necessity of

First method considered. adding equitation to the other duties

in which instruction is at present

given, and it likewise presents the problem of providing for  
horses to carry out that instruction. To meet this latter  
want recourse may either be had to the establishments  
now kept up for the mounted branches, or some  
scheme would have to be developed to provide the necessary  
beasts of burden. With regard to the former, taking into  
consideration the great disproportion in the numerical  
strength between the two branches of the service, it would  
appear to follow that in the large majority of stations such a  
system must fall through from want of means to carry it  
out. It is true that Infantry Regiments might in turn

be sent to obtain a certain degree of proficiency in riding to stations where horses were available ; but then it must be remembered that, if our Infantry soldiers are to be taught to ride and manœuvre when mounted, it would not only be necessary to give them instruction as recruits, but a certain amount of annual training would likewise be required to keep them in practice. It is doubtful, therefore, whether the system of making use of Cavalry horses would be found to work well in practice, and, even if it could be carried out, there would still remain the necessity of providing horses in the field. The other alternative would be the keeping up of separate mounted establishments, as suggested in the *Pioneer*, but to such an arrangement there are objections. In the first place there is the objection of the expense, and that I think would prove fatal to it; and, in the next place, the new establishments in men and horses that would have to be raised would increase the strain on the Control Department in the field ; and this, likewise, is an important defect. On the whole, therefore, there would be great difficulty in devising a scheme to turn the Infantry soldier into a Mounted Rifleman. He might no doubt as a provisional expedient be mounted on horses, mules, camels, or any other animals for service in this country on special occasions, such as the mutiny ; but it would be a hazardous experiment to make use of the Infantry man mounted on a horse in the presence of a scientific European enemy provided with efficient and well-drilled Cavalry, under dashing and enterprising Officers.

The next plan we have to discuss is the dismounting of the Dragoon as contemplated by the Regulations. This plan would not add to the Army Estimates, but it is open to the following objections. The Cavalry man under existing Regulations

has not that special rifle training which is carried out in the Infantry, and which is so essentially necessary for men who are not naturally good shots; secondly, as at present constituted, sufficient time is not devoted to dismounted operations; and lastly, the average Cavalry man with his saddle packed in marching order is too heavy for service in a Corps of Mounted Riflemen, who should be essentially organized in the true spirit of Light Cavalry. The dismounted practice now in vogue should not of course be abolished, and Dragoons on foot might still, as on former occasions, be most useful to supplement the services of other troops fighting on foot; but, taking them as a body as at present constituted, to be converted wholesale into Mounted Riflemen, we should have disadvantages to contend with which might be got rid of by other and better arrangements.

If Infantry mounted on horses, and the Cavalry, as at present constituted, fighting on foot,

Third method considered.  
Selection from Dragoon Regiments recommended.

do not furnish the necessary materials for the solution of the problem,

it becomes necessary to turn to the third plan mentioned, viz., that of having special Corps for the special service; and in raising these Corps it will be necessary to bear in mind the special qualifications that are necessary for Mounted Riflemen, the combination of which would justify our forming Regiments to develop the idea of Mounted Infantry. Now, what are the special qualifications necessary for a beau ideal of a Mounted Rifleman?

They appear to me to be as follows:—Great proficiency in

Qualifications requisite.

riding, first-class shooting, a light, active, and wiry frame, capabilities of

marching on foot, and intelligence and individual resource;

and the question is whence to obtain them? The principle I would advocate is the drafting of men on the principle of selection from other Cavalry Regiments, making it a proviso

Mens selected should have served two years with a Dragoon Regiment.

that each man before he could be transferred should have served two years with a Cavalry Regiment, and should, in the opinion of the Officer Commanding, or of a mixed board of Officers, be a really good rider and otherwise possess the necessary qualifications. Such a system would ensure at the commencement two important and most necessary conditions, viz., that every man in the Corps was, individually, a good rider; and secondly, that all the men had received sufficient training to enable them to manoeuvre efficiently as a mounted body. This would leave the Commanding Officer, whilst keeping up by occasional practice the mounted portion of the Mounted Rifleman's drill, ample time to carry on and complete his instruction as an Infantry soldier.

In pointing out the Cavalry as the source to which we should look, I am, of course, refer-

Cavalry recommended for immediate wants; further arrangements would be necessary for the supply of ultimate requirements.

ring to immediate wants: something in fact that will give us a start at once. With reference to the future it would perhaps be as well, whilst still feeding our Mounted Rifles from the existing Corps of Dragoons, to look out for likely men in Infantry Regiments, in whose ranks there must be many capable of becoming good riders. Such men being selected by a system of volunteering, they should be attached to Cavalry Regiments for two years to learn their duties as Cavalry soldiers. At the expiration of that period they would, if considered fit, be transferred to the Mounted Rifle Corps, or, if they turned out bad riders, they would be remanded to their old Regiments. I have said previously

that any scheme to recommend itself to the authorities must have in addition to its other merits the advantage of not burdening the Finances with heavy extra charges, and to fulfil this condition I would propose no present addition to the numerical strength of the mounted branch, and would

How the scheme should  
be carried out.

suggest that the proposal should be carried out as follows. Supposing there were thirty Regiments of

Cavalry on the Imperial List, each 500 strong, and that it was considered advisable to raise at once, say 5,000 mounted Infantry, all that would be necessary would be to designate twenty of the Cavalry Regiments as at present Heavy or Light, as the case may be, and the remaining ten, which would be formed of drafts from the united body, would be called Mounted Rifles. There would be no reduction which would involve hardship on the Officers, no reduction or increase in the numerical strength of establishments. The only change would be that the light men would be congregated in particular Regiments, which for the future would be subject to a modified and special course of instruction. If the men were available, I would recommend a still larger proportion being organized as Mounted Riflemen, but, at the heavy weights now obtaining in the Cavalry, it is doubtful whether a sufficient number of light men would be available for the purpose. I have mentioned a small number, therefore, merely as a starting-point, but the numerical strength can be increased hereafter if subsequent conditions are favourable. Such appears to me to be the way in which we should set to work, if we wish to introduce a new arm of the service combining the capabilities of the present Mounted and Infantry branches of the service; but, having got so far,

Changes in drill required.  
Difficulties of dismounted  
horses to be overcome.

we are still some way from our goal: we may have found the direction of the road to it, but there



are difficulties in the way which must be overcome before the goal itself is reached, and our endeavours must now be turned towards seeing if we can discover the best way of solving these difficulties. I have pointed out previously that the system now carried out in Cavalry Regiments is not adapted for the proper training of dismounted Riflemen, and it will be necessary for us, therefore, in the first place, to modify the system of drill to meet the requirements of the new arm ; and having done that we must, if we can, overcome the still further difficulties of being able to make a large number of Mounted Riflemen from each Regiment available for fighting on foot, and also of knowing what to do with the riderless horses whilst the Riflemen are dismounted and engaged with the enemy. I shall first of all make a few remarks on the organization and drill.

The men, as I have said before, would be drafted from other Corps, but they should be light weights and active, wiry men. The nature of their duty is essentially that of the lightest Cavalry, and heavy weights would be out of place. Much muscular power is not required ; for, whilst acting as Infantry, the gauge of their fighting powers would depend on the accuracy of their shooting, and, when mounted, on the sharpness of their swords and their good horsemanship. A boy, if he is a good horseman and has a really sharp sword, could cut off the head of a giant. If any one doubts this, let him procure a curved sword and get a native *sick-ligur* to put an edge on it, and he can soon satisfy himself that when a sword won't cut it is the fault of the edge and shape. Light horsemen, moreover, have a great advantage in rapidity of movement and power of manœuvre.

The arrangements for the procuring of Remounts would remain as at present : good breeding, however, should be preferred to mere

Size of men.

Horses.

bone and substance. If Government would not object to the extra charge, it would be a great advantage to give extra money for the Mounted Rifleman's horse as in the case of the Horse Artillery Trooper. The Mounted Rifleman cannot be too well mounted : he should be so well mounted that nothing should be too bold for him. The men, whilst being able to deal their strokes with great rapidity, should at the same time have horses swift enough to elude pursuit if encountered by superior forces. No entire horses should be allowed.

Stable duties would have to be kept up as at present, so far as the morning stables are concerned. Evening stables also, if nothing else was going on, could be carried on as in Dragon Regiments ; but, if the men were required for dismounted drill at that time, no harm would accrue if the evening grooming was dispensed with, especially as it would not be of daily occurrence. It is doubtful whether our system of stables is not carried to excess. There appears to be no reason why one good grooming a day should not be sufficient for a horse, provided of course he was not required for work of an evening. This is an opinion that will probably meet with a good deal of dissent ; but, after all, the question could be easily settled by a practical experiment. Under any circumstances the duration of evening stables might be reduced with advantage. To keep up syces would be very convenient, but it would entail extra expense, and the extra establishment would be a nuisance in the field.

The equipments, like the men, should be light, the saddle and bridle should not exceed 21lbs. in weight. The valise should be abolished as a part of the horse's equipments and be carried

elsewhere. The wallets and haversack should carry sufficient kit for marching order. Sheepskins, likewise, should be done away with : in fact, the equipment packed on the saddle should be reduced to the very lowest limit possible : every extra lb. tells with effect when thirteen stone has once been piled on a horse's back. I would add a standing martingale to the bridle appointments. The object of introducing it is, that the horse should be as much under control as possible. Martingales are, I am aware, strongly objected to by many Cavalry Officers, but I do not recommend them without having strong grounds for doing so. The object of introducing them is, that the horse should be as much under control as possible, and there is no doubt that, if a horse has his head tied down, it gives the rider an immense power over him. It may be said a Cavalry man should be a sufficiently good rider to manage his horse without such assistance, but to be a good rider so far as having a firm seat, and being a good rider so far as it consists in having good hands and being able to manage a horse well, are by no means synonymous terms, and there is a great deal of difference between the riding of an accomplished horseman and that of an ordinary Trooper. Besides, even supposing for the sake of argument that every rider in a Cavalry Regiment was an accomplished horseman, that is no reason why he should not receive mechanical assistance for the management of his horse : he may get wounded or become exhausted, and surely, under any circumstances, it is advisable in the case of a fighting man to give him as absolute control as possible over his horse, for it not only increases his confidence, but it makes him more efficient in every way. Supposing a powerful Dragoon, because he happened to be powerful, could by the mere exercise of his physical power kill a man with a blunt sword, that would be no reason why he should not have the benefit of a sharp one, and the same

argument seems to apply to the martingale. It has always been used by Oriental nations, who keenly appreciate the value of it. The principal objection to it is the cramping of the horse's action by the confinement of his head, but this is by no means the case if it is adjusted with judgment. It can of course, like many other good things, be pushed to excess, in which case it might be injurious. There is nothing whatever to prevent a horse having the full use of his powers with a martingale on, and they may be seen in the hunting field at home, and also occasionally in steeple-chases. It has also this advantage, that when a man has to lead spare horses, which as we get further on in my scheme we shall see will form a prominent part of it, it renders the business much easier. The arrangements for lengthening or tightening it should be such that an adjustment of its length could be carried out without any delay. The bit, likewise, should be powerful, so that, in conjunction with the martingale, the rider might have his horse under thorough objection.

The uniform would have to be altered slightly : a loose dress would be preferable : it would be more comfortable, and would have the advantage of permitting a man to accommodate the amount of his underclothing to the state of the temperature. All belts should be black or brown, and pipe-clay should be reduced to a minimum. Pouches must be altered to hold an increased number of rounds of ammunition. Short boots and gaiters would have to be substituted for long boots ; spurs should be shorter than at present, and fit into the heel with a box ; leather scabbards should be substituted for steel ones, for they are lighter, keep the swords sharp, and make much less noise : they, should be suspended from a frog in the sword-belt, which arrangement would be more convenient

Clothing, arms, equipment, &c. .

for the men when dismounted ; a light curved sabre, too, should be substituted for the heavy straight one now in use. The rifle should be a short one, and a bayonet would not be required. With the present improved fire-arms they appear to be unnecessary, and a sharp sword would be found very effective at close quarters. According to Boguslawski, bayonets were never used in the War of 1870, except in the case of one or two petty engagements in woods and villages.

The Riding School, as it now exists, should be abolished.

Riding School. It has already been stipulated that no man should join the Mounted Rifle

Corps unless he has proved himself a good rider during his probation with a Dragoon Regiment : such being the case, it would be a waste of time trotting him round the rides any longer. Once a good rider, always a good rider, so long as nerve and health last ; and, having so many other important duties to perform, it would be unreasonable to keep up the Riding School as it now exists merely for the sake of keeping up the ideal seat laid down in the Regulations. But equitation drill of another and far more important kind should be substituted. I stated in a former portion of this paper that one of the greatest difficulties in organizing Mounted Infantry was the question of the dismounted horses in action, and it is by an alteration in drill that I propose to get over this difficulty. Under existing arrangements the dismounted horses are always more or less at the mercy of a bold and enterprising Cavalry attack, unless accompanied by a strong escort, and even then if fired into by guns there would be no end of confusion amongst the led horses. I propose to obviate this by an alteration in the riding drill, and by devoting the time now wasted in keeping up a peculiar, and to many distasteful seat, to training the men to move with great



facility and rapidity with dismounted horses. The men should be instructed to mount and dismount with great rapidity, even when the horse is in motion, and, furthermore, be trained up to the highest pitch of skill in the management of led horses. There is no doubt but that by constant practice and drill a body of men holding dismounted horses might be made highly mobile, instead of very much the reverse, as they are at present. I believe that with sufficient training and practice men might be taught not only to move with rapidity, leading *one* spare horse, but with *four*, the two led horses on each side being linked together, the sharp bits and martingales being of great assistance in the management of the led horses, as well as in the case of the mounted ones. It would be well worth while for the Government to put this to the test of practice; for if it could, as I believe, be carried out, it would quadruple the fighting strength of the dismounted Riflemen. Under existing Regulations every other man in a Regiment is holding a comrade's horse, and thus few men are available for fighting on foot; whereas, if men and horses could be so trained that one man might manage four horses besides his own, a great element of strength would be gained, immensely increasing the value of a Mounted Rifle Corps. A practical trial would, however, soon solve the question as to how many horses a man could manage.

The new style of training I have suggested would wonderfully decrease the difficulty of the dismounted horses: they could retire to the rear at a gallop if they found themselves under fire, and if

Greatly increased mobility of dismounted horses under new system of drill.

attacked by Cavalry they could defy pursuit. The dismounted order should of course be not too close; each man should take care of his own led horses, retreat when neces-

sary, come up again to the front at a gallop if necessary, and be in fact in every way as handy as Mounted Cavalry. I would have the men who held the led horses as light as possible so as to elude pursuit if attacked in their non-fighting order : they might be styled the drivers, but they would of course go through exactly the same training as the others, and be available if necessary for fighting purposes. It is wonderful what horses can be trained to, and men likewise : what seems impracticable at first becomes as simple as possible when the necessary training and practice has been acquired. These, then, are the equitation drills which I would advocate in place of the Riding School, which I have recommended to be abolished, and I feel sure that for the peculiar nature of their service this is the system required for Mounted Riflemen.

Sword and carbine exercise should be reduced to a minimum, as they are only useful for show. Practice with single sticks might with advantage be substituted for the former. The rifle instruction, as ordered in the Musketry Regulations, should of course be carried out to the fullest extent as at present in the Infantry, and should be supplemented by a certain amount of practice on horseback. The Corps should be able

to manœuvre as a Cavalry Regiment, and take its place with other Cavalry Regiments on parade. Having been thoroughly drilled with this view during the time the men were in Dragoon Regiments, a very little practice, say one parade a week, would be required to keep them up to the mark, in the mounted manœuvres. At least half of the time apportioned for parade duties should be devoted to dismounted practice, such as would be required by the men if acting against an enemy

Sword and carbine exercise and rifle instruction.

Parades.

on foot ; and to meet this want a few additions would have to be introduced into the Regulations for guidance as to the method of coming into action, and the manœuvres of the men as Light Infantry soldiers during such time as they might be dismounted. For coming into action an arrangement, something like that recommended by Sir Henry Havelock, might be adopted. We will suppose that a flank attack has to be made, or some position siezed, and that time is of importance, and the Mounted Riflemen are ordered to take the duty : they will proceed either in open column of troops or any other formation that may be suitable to the ground, just as if they were going to attack in a mounted capacity. That portion of the Mounted Riflemen who are to form the first line of skirmishers will advance till they arrived just outside the zone of Infantry fire, when they will at once extend mounted in small bodies of five men ten yards apart. Those who are to act on foot dismount quickly from their horses and hand them over to the drivers, who at once gallop with them straight to the rear and form up in a position previously pointed out, the dismounted men dividing the intervals. The second line of supports will dismount 400 yards in rear of the first line, and their horses will likewise join those of the first line at the appointed " rendezvous" : whether they should extend or not would of course depend on circumstances ; the horses, however, in any case will carry the riders to their proper positions, and then unite in a body at some favourable spot in rear. Cavalry scouts connect them with the fighting portion of the Regiments and patrol both flanks to give timely information of any attack from the enemy's Cavalry. Should such an attack take place the tactics of the drivers would be to retire as fast as possible to the rear till pursuit was over. The dismounted men, having been trained to fight on foot, being of course like Infantry and quite independent of their horses, are well able to take care of themselves. If a main body was required in support of the



skirmishers and supports, it could be supplied by the Infantry, who would have plenty of time to get into position whilst the dismounted Riflemen were carrying on the fight in front. When and how the dismounted horses would join their riders would of course depend on circumstances, but it should be a perfectly understood thing that the men when once dismounted should be able to fight without them, and that the Officer in charge of the dismounted horses would make it his principal duty to see that their safety was in no way jeopardised by attacks from the enemy's Cavalry. In order to secure such a system working well in the field, it would of course be necessary to introduce it into the drill book, and, if practised as a regular part of the manœuvres, it would probably be found by no means so difficult as it might at first sight appear. Not only would the Mounted Riflemen be of great value in the offensive operations alluded to, but they would be of equal use to meet sudden flank or other attacks from the enemy. If a sudden concentration of troops was required at any one spot, what body of troops so available and in every way so suited to the purpose as Mounted Riflemen? They could mass three or four thousand men with the greatest rapidity on any threatened point of importance, and, four-fifths of them being available as Infantry soldiers, they could stem the torrent of the enemy's advance till the Regular Infantry had time to arrive at the scene of action; and who shall gauge the value of such troops in crises where moments are of priceless advantage? Not only do they give the Infantry time to arrive, but they permit of their coming up without hurry or confusion, and thus get rid of the fatigue and loss of breath caused by a long march at the double. It is of great importance for the Infantry to arrive at any threatened point fresh and in good wind, but it matters not in the case of the horses of the Rifle-

men, who can gallop at speed to the spot required, as all they have to do is to deposit their riders in a given position, and they are then taken away quietly to the rear where they can recover their breath.

Such then are the broad outlines of the scheme I would recommend for the formation of a Cavalry and Infantry qualifications combined Mounted Infantry Corps; and in tracing them I have endeavoured to suggest a method of organization which will produce a Corps of really good riders, such as can be expected to take care of themselves if attacked by Cavalry in their mounted formation, and at the same time a body of men who having all received a careful musketry training, and having been especially drilled so as to be able to act in a dismounted capacity, might be expected to produce a very considerable amount of effect during such times as they were acting as Infantry. I have further tried, by utilising materials which we have already in hand, to devise a scheme which has at least one merit, and that is, that it will not burden the State with heavy extra charges. The difficulty of the dismounted horses will, I doubt not, be got over by carrying out the modified system of equitation drill now recommended, and which has hitherto not been recognised in our Cavalry Regulations. If the ideas which have been put forth are not Utopian, but on the contrary practicable suggestions that could be carried out without delay by the mere issue of the requisite orders, then I venture to think that Government has now in hand the means of introducing a new weapon of offence, which would not only prove an immense source of power in this country, where rapidity of movement and the saving of the European is of so much importance, but further, the skeleton of an organization which, if fully developed, would prove of the greatest im-

portance in European warfare. The position of Cavalry in war since the introduction of breech-loaders and improved rifled guns has changed very much, and it will not do, whilst other branches of the service are receiving the greatest attention to keep them up to the standard of modern

Other branches of the service keep moving; the Cavalry must not stand still.

requirements, to allow the Cavalry branch to stand still, and to lose its comparative importance from the want of development of its latent resources. Recent campaigns have clearly shown the past services performed by the mounted branch in covering armies and gaining information of the enemy; the old Napoleonic theory of keeping the Cavalry in reserve has been abandoned, and they are now sent freely to the front; but who shall say that, in introducing this measure of reform to meet the tactical requirements of the age, all has been done that is necessary to render the mounted branch equal to the performance of all its capabilities? The recognition of outpost and detached duties as specialities which should be performed by the Cavalry may be a reform in the right direction, but to stop so far and go no further is surely to take a short-sighted view of the case. To inundate the army by introducing wholesale a number of newly-raised Mounted Infantry Regiments may perhaps be a mistaken policy, from the simple fact that it would be impracticable. The material in men and horses would not be forthcoming, the addition to the Army Estimates would be overwhelming, the strain on the Control Department would be insupportable. But to make use of material which is already in hand, and a reorganization of which would be no burden on the Finances of the State : in a word, to develop the efficiency of our existing troops to the highest pitch : this should be the policy of a wise Government. Cavalry must be maintained : of this there can be no manner of doubt :

why not, therefore, make them as efficient as possible? The contempt conveyed in the definition of a Dragoon being a soldier who fights indifferently on horseback or on foot may perhaps have been justifiable when Dr. Johnson expounded the meaning of the term; but the age in which that definition was written has gone by, a new age has succeeded, and surely such a definition should not be allowed to remain applicable to all eternity. The question of fighting on foot is one which depends on organization, and there is every reason to believe that mounted soldiers can fight on foot if certain necessary conditions are forthcoming; and these conditions can, I believe, be fulfilled by carrying out the suggestions which I have proposed. The system of selection from Dragoon Regiments will secure good riders, the increased musketry instruction will raise the standard of the shooting to that of the existing Infantry, the alteration in the equitation drill will get over the difficulties of the dismounted horses in action, and a modified system of tactical instruction will secure the requisite training as Light Infantry soldiers. The organization which has been recommended will, whilst improving the value of the Dragoon as a Foot soldier, by no means do away with his value as a Cavalry trooper. There is no ground whatever for supposing that under the system proposed the value of the Mounted Rifleman's services as a Cavalry soldier should in any way deteriorate because changes have been made in his tactical instruction. Good horsemanship is the basis of good Cavalry organization, said the Confederate General FitzHugh Lee, when stating his views on certain questions which had been submitted to him for his opinion, and a truer word was never said. With good riding as a basis, two years' drill in a Cavalry Regiment, and occasional practice subsequently, there is no fear of the Mounted Rifleman losing his efficiency as a mounted soldier.

Having now endeavoured to the best of my ability to

If practicable, is the organization recommended expedient.

prove the practicability of my scheme, it will be necessary to say

a few words as to whether, even supposing the practicability be admitted, the adoption of it is expedient. The question of expediency will of course depend in a great measure on the tactical value of the new arm; and, if it can be shown that it is difficult to manage in the field, and that the employment of it might lead to disaster, then the Government would not be justified in adopting it. Now, in considering the value of the new arm on the theatre of a battle-field, it will be as well to remember at the outset that it is not proposed for one moment that the services of the Regular Infantry are in any way to be superseded in consequence of the introduction of Mounted Riflemen. Each arm has a speciality of its own, and there is no reason for one in any way to interfere with the other. The Infantry always has been the arm on which special reliance has been placed, and so it will remain; but in these days of breech-loaders, when front attacks are so difficult, that they may, except under special circumstances, be said to be impossible, and when in consequence a diversion on an enemy's flank is of such importance, it then becomes a fair matter for speculation whether it is not advisable to make use of a highly mobile method for placing those who are to make the flank attack in the necessary position as rapidly and as suddenly as possible. If a flank attack is slowly developed, as must more or less be the case with foot soldiers, who have a long distance to march at very slow rates, two things must of necessity follow: first, the enemy has much more time to meet the movement by a fresh disposition of troops; and, secondly, the Infantry will probably be more or less exhausted before they come into action; whereas, if Mounted Infantry are made use of, the

direction in which the attack was to be developed could be concealed till the last moment, and the movement then be made with such rapidity and suddenness, that the chances of its success would be considerably increased, and the men who were to make the attack would arrive in position fresh and full of physical energy. Mounted Riflemen would likewise be of immense value in cases where it might be considered necessary to deceive the enemy, especially where it was required to make a feint on one point with the view of endeavouring to make the enemy concentrate in that direction, and then suddenly to develop the attack in another. In a word, their sphere of action on the battle-field would be to assist the Infantry of the Line by taking such portions of their duty as involved the greatest amount of physical labour in marching, and in which duty it was of the utmost importance to strike with rapidity. Such I take it would be the way in which Mounted Riflemen would be best engaged when made use of in a dismounted capacity.

It is of importance, however, in discussing this question, to remember that it is not to be supposed that the enemy will stand quietly by and allow themselves to be persecuted by these light mounted troops without doing something to counteract their offensive movements. There will be two ways in which they would probably act—the one to attack them with Cavalry when proceeding to take up their position preparatory to acting as dismounted soldiers, and the other to concentrate an artillery fire on them when they have succeeded in getting into position. The contemplation of these two contingencies lead us to the consideration of the fact that the greatest effects of tactical skill depend not so

Mounted Riflemen under above circumstances would necessarily be the object of enemy's attack.

much on the individual power of any one arm as on the combined action of all, each supporting and receiving assistance from the others; and it thus becomes apparent, that, in thus making use of our Mounted Infantry, we must combine it with the other arms of the service, and, as it is a highly mobile body, it must necessarily be associated with other equally mobile troops. It would follow, therefore, that, to defeat the enemy's schemes for preventing the Mounted Infantry getting into a position which would seriously threaten their flank, it would be necessary in these flank attacks to detail with the Mounted Infantry Cavalry proper and Artillery: the former would oppose the enemy's Cavalry, the Mounted Riflemen acting as their support, and the Artillery would be required to reply to the guns which might be brought by the enemy to bear on the dismounted Riflemen when in position. This would probably lead to an increase of Cavalry engagements between Cavalry bodies which would develop the utility of the mounted branch and be favourable for the British Army, which has the finest Cavalry in the world. The dismounted horses, after parting company from their riders, being under the new system of drill highly mobile and accustomed to manœuvre at a gallop, would, as already pointed out, when threatened, decline combat, and make themselves safe by simply retiring at speed till the danger was over.

It does not appear, therefore, that there is any reason why Mounted Infantry, if organized on proper principles, should not exercise a very considerable influence on the field of battle, not only by their fire, but also indirectly by sparing the Infantry the excessive fatigue caused by long flank marches; nor is it probable that there is any chance of disaster if they are employed in the manner recommended. Their training as

Inexpediency of Mounted Infantry not apparent if organized on proper principles.

Infantry soldiers is perfect, and there need therefore be no cause of alarm if circumstances prevented their remounting their horses at a moment's notice. Their own fire is a very sufficient protection, and it is supplemented, moreover, by that of the Batteries which accompany them ; and furthermore, as they are acting in concert with Cavalry proper, there need be no apprehensions from the enemy's Cavalry. Under the system now in force under which half a Regiment is required to hold the horses of the other half, and a still further reduction is made in the number of men available for dismounted duty in order to form an escort, no doubt the fire of a Mounted Rifle Regiment would be too trivial to be of much importance. Sir H. Havelock in his book, page 62, contemplates only seventy men in line out of each Regiment, and such a strength would certainly be of little use ; but if, under the system proposed, men and horses could be so drilled as to enable four men out of five to be available for Infantry purposes, each Regiment of 500 strong could put 400 men into action, and thus in the case of, say, six Regiments would represent a very powerful force taken into consideration with the Cavalry and Artillery with them. Besides being available on the field of battle for dismounted fighting as above discussed, the Mounted Riflemen would likewise, if so required, be in every way fully capable of taking their place with the Cavalry to take part in any offensive movement that might be made by the mounted branch. Being well mounted and efficiently drilled as Cavalry soldiers, their services in a mounted capacity would be fully equal to those of their brethren in Dragoon Regiments, and they would, moreover, from being essentially organized on the true Light Cavalry principle, be of special value in all cases, where it was deemed necessary to pursue and harass a retreating enemy.



In addition to the important part that would be played by the Mounted Riflemen on the field of battle, there appears to be no single sphere of military operations where their services would not be of the highest importance. Using them as the Germans used their Cavalry in the late war, they would possess all the qualifications of the ordinary Cavalry soldier, with this in addition, that having received tactical training as Infantry soldiers, and being organized on principles which permitted of the full development of such training, they would be capable of performing services which a Dragoon Regiment organized as at present could not attempt. The want of the fighting power of their Cavalry on foot was felt by the Germans in the late campaigns. Boguslawski tells us that they frequently found it necessary to attach Infantry to their Cavalry to hold small posts, or to enable it to cross certain tracts of country. To chain Cavalry to Infantry, however, is to compel the former to regulate its movements by the marching capabilities of the latter; and on detached duties which involved considerable marching powers, and where time was of importance, it would appear to be of great advantage to possess a body of men combining the speed of the Cavalry branch with the fighting capabilities of the Infantry soldier. Then again on picquet duty there is nothing whatever in the organization proposed that will in any way interfere with the due performance of such duties: indeed, it is to be inferred that a superior training as a Rifleman and Light Infantry soldier would be likely to develop rather than diminish the utility of the Mounted Riflemen on such duties. The same may be said of all the other minor operations of war in which Cavalry proper are now employed, and it would be waste of time to enter into a discussion on each point separately.

Mounted Riflemen equally available for ordinary Cavalry duties.

If the views put forth are correct, then there can surely be

Conclusion.

no reason why the notion of organizing Mounted Infantry should not

only be good as an abstract idea, but a practical one capable of being worked out, and carrying with it an improved organization in the mounted branch of the service. Furthermore, it would appear that in introducing it, so far from doing anything that is inexpedient, or likely to produce an element of danger in our tactical combinations, we shall on the contrary secure a powerful weapon of offence, and in all operations that require swiftness of execution lighten the physical exertions of our Regular Infantry. We shall have an arm of the service which will place at the disposal of the Commanding General a body of troops which, in addition to the special duties of the Cavalry branch, are as ready, equally, to carry out a *coup de main* as to resist a sudden and unexpected attack of the enemy, and which, so far from in any way interfering with the action of the Regular Infantry, works with it, acting as it were on such occasions, as it is associated with it, as its advanced guard, and giving it time to come into action. Mobility always has been, and always will be, an essential element in all tactical changes, and as time is now, more than ever, of infinite importance, there is no reason to doubt that as years roll on the value of mobility will become of even more importance than it is at present. Straining to their utmost every nerve to secure the advantages of rapidity of movement, the extended use of mounted troops will inevitably present itself to the minds of rival combatants, the value of the mounted branch will be ever on the increase, and Cavalry combats will become more frequent than they are now. But the tactics of the coming age will assuredly differ from the days when Murat's Cavalry were hurled *en masse* on the enemy on the Field of Eylau. The old

Cavalry tactics may not entirely disappear, the mounted branch may still be available, as in days of yore, for the destruction of shattered Infantry and the pursuit of flying troops ; but fresh opportunities for distinction will arise, new spheres of action will be opened up, and the importance of Mounted Infantry, in the true sense of the word, will eventually be realized. It is time we should shake ourselves free from the traditions of past generations, and that this important question should receive the consideration it deserves. Shall England, possessed of the greatest wealth, the best horses, and the boldest riders, slumber, or shall it realise coming events and be wise in time ?

---

356.11  
Call No. HOG

Accession No. 9442

Title Mounted Infantry:  
an essay.

Author Hogg, Capt.

DATE	BORROWER'S	DATE
------	------------	------

FOR CONSULTATION  
FOR CONSULTATION  
ONLY